



Swimming Pools and Water Parks

Fact Sheet

The Swimming Pool and Water Parks Program is mandated by state law (Louisiana Revised Statutes 40:4.A (11)), but is not funded by either self-generated monies nor by state general fund monies. Vigorous enforcement of the Code is required to prevent corner cutting and introduction of unsafe pool structures or practices which could kill or injure people. The Virginia Graeme Baker Act needs to be enforced to ensure public safety and quality economic development. Sanitarians used to test chlorine residual and bacteriological in public pools but funding was cut for this activity and people have since become ill from poor pool sanitation, especially in water parks.

People die, are injured or made sick from poor pool design or from poor pool sanitation. A strong code and oversight from DHH is required to prevent illnesses and deaths.

Performance Indicators

- %killed in pool accidents due to faulty
- % killed due to pool contamination
- % sickened in pool accidents due to faulty
- % sickened due to pool contamination

Narrative

Since 1923, Louisiana engineers have been issuing permits for public swimming pools and water parks after reviewing plans and specifications. They also review and approve/disapprove new or innovative products or practices, advise plumbers, sanitarians, municipal and parish inspectors, designers, hotels and parks, and the Fire Marshall's Office on technical construction and installation issues. They periodically work with shareholders and the federal agencies to keep the Code up to date. Engineers also review and recommend action to the State Health officer on requests for variances from the Code and respond to complaints with an inspection, investigation and enforcement action, when needed.

Better Health

- To keep people safe from poor design or sanitation of pools and water parks, a strong Code is needed. The potential population served is >5.4 Million people/year – including citizens and visitors. There would be little economic development or tourism in Louisiana if people were may ill or died from exposure to poor public pool sanitation or bad design. There are a great deal of innovative designs in the marketplace and many of them are unsafe.
- Engineering Services collaborates with a wide range of stakeholders, including: the FHA and the CDC, the National Sanitation Foundation, the State Plumbing Board, the Louisiana State Uniform Construction Code Council, the State Board for Licensing Engineers, the Louisiana Municipal Association, the Police Jury Association, and the Fire Marshall's office. National collaborations include the American Backflow Prevention Association, the National Swimming Pool Foundation, the US Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Pool Safety Council, the Association of Pool and Spa Professionals, the World Water Park Association and the American Water Works Association.

Engineering Services staff respond to every request for variance from the code, new product and new system approvals, and citizen complaint, and work hands-on with sanitarians, plumbers, the Code Council, and the Fire Marshall's Office, to ensure that swimming pools have safe designs and are sanitized properly in compliance with the regulations.

Vigilance is required to protect the public from poor design and sanitation of public pools. Good engineering decisions are required daily on topics such as compliance with the new Virginia Graeme Baker Act and innovative designs. Hundreds of documented infections of Giardia have occurred in Louisiana from poor sanitation at a water park as well as 31 cases of cryptosporidium in 2007. Deaths from accidents caused by poor designs have occurred in other states and in other countries, but not in Louisiana, because of enforcement of the Code. Pool manufacturers try to construct structures with design components that have cause illness and deaths in other states but not in Louisiana because of DHH vigilance.

- State Authority: L.R.S. 40:4 A (11)
- State Regulation: Title 51, Part XXIV Federal Authority: 15 USC 8001, *et seq.* (Virginia Graeme Baker Pool & Spa Safety Act) enforced only on new or substantially renovated pools
 - Websites: www.nspf.org, www.poolsafety.gov, www.apsp.org,
 - Center for Environmental Health: <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov/offices/?ID=242>,
 - DHH-OPH Engineering Services: <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov/offices/?ID=204>,
 - Safe Drinking Water: <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov/offices/?id=238>.